

# **“The Power Place...A Family Church” Bylaws**

## **Preamble**

Recognizing that God has called His people to meet, worship and serve together in structured ways which the New Testament refers to as local churches, and that it is God’s desire that all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40), we, the family members of The Power Place, have set forth the following Bylaws as a basis for that structure and order.

Our paradigm for function is like that of a family. While we recognize that Bylaws are necessary for proper order, we also affirm that the attitudes of love, honor and respect are the true foundation for any healthy group of people who seek to fulfill God’s purpose.

## **Purpose:**

The Power Place is a present day expression of the New Testament Church. Our desire is to imitate, experience and live out the reality of Christ’s presence in the way the ‘Acts’ church did. Scripture paints a picture of a church committed to five primary purposes: worship, fellowship, discipleship, evangelism and service.

These purposes are drawn from the two directives given by Jesus Himself, the Great Commandment (Mark 12:28-34) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). It is our vision and stated objective to “*Reach people away from God to be changed by His love.*” We are being changed to BE the change! Our goal is to...

*Connect people with God...Because everyone needs Forgiveness!*

*Connect people with People...Because everyone needs a Friend!*

*Connect people with Their Purpose...Because everyone needs a Future!*

It is our desire to call people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ and to live out the values and realities of the book of Acts. The Power Place is a Healing Place – a Growing Place – a Transforming Place – a place to Belong & Become!

## **Name**

The name of this organization is The Power Place...*A Family Church*, of the County of Chester, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

## **Prerogatives**

The Power Place (TPP) family shall have the right to govern itself and conduct its own affairs according to the standards of the New Testament and the values of healthy family function. Our objective, as an organization, is to follow Jesus in a unified and effective way.

These rights for self-governance shall include such matters as the calling of a Pastor, selection of the Leadership Team, discipline of Family Members and the conduct of all its services, ministries and initiatives.

It shall also have the right to purchase, acquire by gift, own, use, sell, mortgage, lease or dispose of any real estate and/or property as may be necessary for the furtherance of its purposes.

The TPP family shall have all the powers of a non-profit corporation under the Pennsylvania Non-profit Corporation Law of 1988, as amended.

## **Affiliation**

The Power Place shall have perpetual existence and is a sovereign assembly. As such, The Power Place maintains the right to govern its own affairs. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other like-minded churches, The Power Place family voluntarily affiliates with the General Council of the Assemblies of God, both nationally and locally. TPP willingly shares in the privileges and assumes the responsibilities enjoined by such an affiliation. TPP also reserves the right to network with other organizations of 'like mind' as it deems beneficial.

## **Statement of Faith (condensed version)**

We are a ***casual church with a serious faith***. We may simplify the approach to ministry, but when it comes to our beliefs, there are some non-negotiable truths that ground us. These keep us moving toward God and reaching out to our world.

### **The Bible is God Inspired** – 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Bible is our compass for living. God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light for our path. The Old and New Testament is given by God for us to study so we can apply its principles and lessons. Scripture is the ultimate authority for life. There are no errors in God's Word.

### **God is the One True God and Jesus Christ is His Son** – John 17:3

There is one all-powerful God that is the creator of Heaven and Earth. He loved us so much that He sent His Son so we can have a relationship with Him. Jesus Christ is fully God. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, taught truth, died on a cross for the payment for our sins, and resurrected from the dead. His saving and healing power is available for us today.

### **People Sin. God Saves** – Romans 6:23

We mess up and the Bible calls it sin. God created us in His own image, but we chose disobedience. We deserve death and separation from God, but by His grace through His Son Jesus we can be forgiven. By trusting Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we can experience freedom and live an amazing life.

### **Communion and Water Baptism** – Acts 2:41-42, Romans 6:3-5

There are two ways we can remember what Jesus did for us on the cross. Communion is a memorial and a celebration. The Eucharist consists of two elements: the bread helps remind us of His body that was broken for us and the cup reminds us of His blood that was spilled for the payment for our sins. The Bible encourages us to follow Jesus' example by being immersed in water after we make a decision to follow Him. It is a public way for us to show that we are changed...an outward sign of an inner reality.

### **Life Change** – Romans 12:1-2

God welcomes us the way we are, but change begins to happen from the inside out. He loves you just the way you are but He also loves you too much to leave you like that! We stop living for ourselves and desire to glorify God by our actions and words. God helps us change the way we act and the way we think!

### **The Holy Spirit** – Acts 1:8

The baptism in the Holy Spirit gives us power to share the good news of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin. He gives us different gifts so we can build up the church and love others. The gifts of the Spirit used in an orderly way are a beautiful and vital part of the church.

### **The Church** – 1 Timothy 3:14-15, Matthew 5:13-16

The Church of the living God is the pillar and foundation of the truth and has been established by Him for His purposes on earth. God has called the

Church to represent Himself in this world and to make a huge difference. Just like salt & light affects and changes whatever it comes in contact with, so we, the Church, are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

### **God's Plan for the End Times** – 1 Thessalonians 4:17

The Bible says that Jesus will return to the earth to bring His followers to Heaven. There will be a final judgment in which the dead will be resurrected and judged. Everyone whose name is not in the Book of Life will be separated from God for eternity in Hell. Those whose names are written in the Book of Life will be rewarded and spend eternity in Heaven with God and other followers of Christ.

Read a full statement of our beliefs by visiting [www.ag.org](http://www.ag.org) where you will find the Statement of Fundamental Truths.

## **Governance**

The Power Place Family will have the right to govern itself according to the principles of the Bible.

It is the intent of TPP to function less like an institution and more like a family. We recognize that families seek relational solutions to problems and not political ones; however, we also realize that leadership processes must be defined and clear. The ultimate goal of the leadership processes of The Power Place is the implementation and obedience to the specific will of Jesus defined through the Bible, the leading of the Holy Spirit, and the agreement of this community of faith.

We use the "Seven Values of Church Family Governance" as a guide as set forth in this document (see Exhibit 2).

The Power Place shall be a congregation led by a pastoral leadership team and subject to the apostolic authority of the presbytery of the PennDel Ministry Network of The Assemblies of God. This presbytery shall protect The Power Place through advice, prayer, and the accountability of its pastor. The pastoral leadership team shall be the board of directors of The Power Place, and as such, shall act as the governing authority for The Power Place by providing spiritual guidance, vision, equipping the church for ministry, setting its major policies, and exercising responsibility for its ministries and operations.

## **APOSTOLIC OVERSIGHT**

Since the presbytery serves an apostolic role, the pastoral leadership team shall be personally accountable to them and remain submitted to their directives in relation to theology, morals, and ethics. The presbytery shall not receive any compensation for their services from The Power Place, but may be reimbursed for substantiated, out-of-pocket expenses incurred while serving The Power Place in their oversight capacity, subject to the availability of funding.

## **PASTORAL LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**Function:** The lead pastor shall serve the dual roles as both the spiritual overseer of all other Power Place participants and ministries as well as the president of the pastoral leadership team as legal board of directors of The Power Place. Such a role also includes the leader and the chair of family meetings. The lead pastor shall have the general powers and duties of supervision and management usually vested in the pastoral office of any local church and the president of any corporation.

The pastoral leadership team shall provide spiritual guidance and corporate stability while serving as its spiritual and temporal governing body. Whereas the New Testament uses the term "elder" in every instance to describe the vocational office of a pastor ("elder" and "pastor" are interchangeable terms), and whereas the Scriptures also make it abundantly clear that the early church was pastor-led (elder-led), therefore the official leadership of The Power Place shall consist of the pastoral leadership team which is primarily authorized to fulfill the following duties and responsibilities:

### **Feed & Equip the Church Body**

- Preach, model and teach the congregation the sound doctrine and principles of the Scriptures
- Ensure that the church family is consistently being rooted and established in the faith, growing in maturity as Christ followers, and ultimately discovering their spiritual gifts and producing spiritual fruit that remains

### **Protect the Church Body**

- Mediate disputes in the church
- Prevent doctrinal errors from being circulated
- Exercise church discipline
- Warn the church of behavior that violates Scriptural principles
- Ensure that the bylaws herein are followed carefully
- Defend, protect, and support the integrity of the pastors

### **Govern the Body**

- Direct all the affairs of the church to ensure that the mission is accomplished in a spirit of unity, including business & monetary decisions, the raising of funds and the disbursement of such funds
- Oversee the provision of the physical facilities needed by The Power Place, including the buying and selling of real estate and securing real estate leases
- Work in cooperation with the presbytery as a search team to assist in locating a new lead pastor, when such need arises.

### **Care for the Body**

- Provide spiritual advice to members of the congregation
- Pray for those who are sick spiritually, mentally, physically, socially, or emotionally, and make arrangements for tangible assistance when necessary
- Ensure that the environment of church events is a safe place for adults and children, believers and seekers

At The Power Place, the church family and friends can expect that our pastors function according to the New Testament model of a spiritual father/parent/shepherd as illustrated in Ephesians 4:11-12, "*So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.*"

These functions include the creative role (apostle), corrective/directive role (prophet), evangelizing/reproducing role (evangelist), caring/shepherding role (pastor), training/feeding role (teacher), so as to equip, care for, inspire and mobilize God's people for service.

**Qualifications:** The lead pastor shall be someone who not only fulfills all the qualifications of pastoral leadership as described hereof, but who also shall be in good standing as an active, ordained or licensed minister with the Assemblies of God.

Members of the pastoral leadership team shall possess the character and attributes of a leader as described herein. They shall also be able to teach and use Scripture to exhort and refute others, be blameless and above reproach, not be overbearing or lord their positions over others, and have a good reputation with people inside and outside of The Power Place. Furthermore, members of the official pastoral leadership team shall be credentialed with the Assemblies of God, or diligently working toward credentials with the Assemblies of God, unless specifically exempted by the lead pastor.

**Appointment and Removal:** If the lead pastor is deceased while in office, incapacitated indefinitely, disciplined by the presbytery, resigns, retires, or vacates the office for any other reason, then the presbytery shall work cooperatively with the remaining pastoral leadership team to locate a new lead pastor. Both bodies, jointly functioning as one pastoral search team, shall prayerfully consider a list of eligible candidates who might possess a similar style and philosophy as The Power Place. The spouse of the lead pastor may participate in conjunction with the pastoral search team in the search for a successor unless the lead pastor has resigned, retired, or is under discipline by the presbytery. Once the team has determined its choice of candidate, then they shall present their recommendation to the church family, allowing ample opportunity to become acquainted with the candidate. Then at a duly called family meeting, confirmation of the new lead pastor by the church family shall be with a two-thirds confirmation.

Accusations and procedures for discipline regarding the lead pastor, and his subsequent removal, shall be in accordance with the Matthew 18 process and with the bylaws of the presbytery. If there is any suspicion of moral, ethical, or theological deviancy by the lead pastor, then the pastoral leadership team is obligated to contact the presbytery after having followed the Matthew 18 process to its fullest extent so that they can conduct their investigation, and if appropriate, discipline. Any member of the pastoral leadership team may be removed by the lead pastor without cause, provided all legal regulations regarding employment termination have been satisfied.

**Compensation:** Pastoral compensation packages will be determined in accordance with the suggested guidelines of the PennDel Ministry Network of The Assemblies of God. The Lead Pastors compensation package will be determined by the Pastor's Accountability Group.

**Transition between Lead Pastors:** To ensure the unity of the church by a smooth transition between lead pastor appointments, the pastoral leadership team, as defined herein, in consultation with the presbytery and the Pastor's Accountability Group, shall select an interim lead pastor during the period of time between pastoral appointments to fulfill the basic duties of the lead pastor until a new lead pastor is selected. The qualifications for the interim lead pastor shall be the same as the lead pastor. In the event that a dispute arises, the presbytery shall serve as the mediator and their counsel shall be binding. The interim lead pastor shall not cast vision or alter the philosophy of The Power Place to reflect his own personal views. The interim lead pastor shall cover the primary preaching schedule, discharge the basic pastoral care duties, and ensure that the ministries of The Power Place continue to function. The interim lead pastor shall not possess any other corporate powers granted to the lead pastor by these bylaws without the unanimous

approval of the pastoral leadership team. The interim lead pastor shall be remunerated for his service at a fair salary mutually agreed upon by the interim lead pastor and the pastoral leadership team, upon the counsel of the presbytery. During the interim period between lead pastor appointments, members of the pastoral leadership team are to continue in their positions. Should leadership or financial problems arise, the interim lead pastor shall have the authority to alter the duties, roles, and/or terms of employment of all employees and the terms of service for all volunteer leadership positions, including dismissal if necessary, but only upon the ratification of the presbytery. Any employees serving under a previous lead pastor shall tender their resignations to the new lead pastor immediately upon his appointment. The new lead pastor shall have up to six months to accept or reject said resignations. When the new lead pastor is in place, he shall have full authority to select his staff, replacing existing staff personnel if he should so choose.

**Limits of Authority:** Because the pastoral leadership team is responsible for all final decisions for The Power Place, they shall seek the counsel of the presbytery in important matters so as to protect the interests and the integrity of the church. The lead pastor shall preside over all decisions as long as the issue at hand does not involve a conflict of interest or personal inurement for himself. Matters regarding the lead pastor shall be deferred to the presbytery.

## **MEDIATION OF DISPUTES**

Should irreconcilable differences arise between the lead pastor and the pastoral leadership team, which might destroy the unified, effective ministry of The Power Place, then either the lead pastor or the majority of the pastoral leadership team may request the presbytery to investigate and attempt to mediate such differences in the spirit of Familial Reconciliation.

## **Indemnification**

### **Section 1: General**

Except for responsibility or liability of a Pastor pursuant to any criminal statute or the liability of a Pastor for the payment of taxes pursuant to federal, state or local law, a Pastor shall not be personally liable for monetary damages for any action taken unless the Pastor breached or failed to perform the duties of his office or the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct or recklessness.

## **Section 2: Third-Party Actions**

The corporation shall indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative (other than action by or in the right of the corporation) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a representative of the corporation, against expenses (including attorneys' fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with the action or proceeding, if such person acted in good faith and a manner the person reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interests of the corporation, and, with such care, including reasonable inquiry, skill and diligence, as a person of ordinary prudence would use under similar circumstances, and with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement or conviction or upon a pleas of nolo contendere or its equivalent shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner which the person reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interests of the corporation, and, with respect to any criminal proceeding, that the person had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

## **Section 3: Mandatory Indemnification**

To the extent that a representative of the corporation has been successful on the merits or otherwise in the defense of any action, suit or proceeding referred to in Section 2 of this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue or matter therein, such person shall be indemnified against expenses (including attorneys' fees) actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection therewith.

## **Section 4: Supplementary Coverage**

The indemnification provided by the Section 2 of this Article shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification may be entitled under the Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1988, any other provision of law, the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws or any agreement, vote of disinterested Directors and Elders or otherwise, both as the action in a person's official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding such office, and shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be a

representative, and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors and administrators of such a person.

## **Fiscal Definitions:**

### **General**

The Power Place Family, through its Pastoral Leadership Team, shall create and maintain such departments and sub-organizations as may be necessary and advisable for the extension of its financial work. All such departments and organizations shall be subordinate to The Power Place Family and shall contribute to the harmony and development of the whole. They shall be under the general supervision of the Lead Pastor and Accountability Group. All significant contracts should be reviewed by a competent attorney and the Pastoral Leadership Team prior to signing. The Power Place will not engage in or sponsor any political activity.

### **Property**

All property of The Power Place Family shall be deeded to The Power Place Family and held in its incorporated name. No property valued at more than 20% of the previous year's disbursements shall be sold, leased, mortgaged or otherwise disposed of without being presented to the Family Membership at a duly called meeting and approved by at least 2/3 of the members present at the Family Membership Meeting.

### **Dissolution**

Upon the dissolution of The Power Place Family, none of its funds or assets shall be distributed to any Pastor, Officer or any other individual. The Pastoral Leadership Team, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of The Power Place Family, shall dispose of all the funds and assets of the church by conveying the same to the PennDel District Council of the Assemblies of God, for the purposes of the Church, provided that the said District Council at the time qualifies as an exempt organization under section 501 © (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

These said funds shall be conveyed to the PennDel District Council of the Assemblies of God with the express intent and hope that they be reinvested in a church planting movement in the region of Philadelphia, PA or Chester County, PA in particular. In the event the PennDel District Council of the Assemblies of God is unable or unwilling to accept the transfer of all the property of this Church, then such property shall be transferred to an organization operated exclusively for religious purposes with tax-exempt status under Section 501 © (3) of the Internal Revenue Code whose purposes are nearest the purposes of The General Council of the Assemblies

of God, which transfer shall be made by the appropriate court of the county in which this church is located.

### **Order**

In order to facilitate the conduct of business in an orderly and satisfactory manner, the Family Membership Meetings shall be governed by the accepted rules of Parliamentary Procedure in keeping with the spirit of Christian love and fellowship.

### **Amendments**

These Bylaws may be amended by majority agreement of the Family Membership of TPP Family who are present at a duly called Family Membership Meeting.

### **Family Membership Meetings:**

Special Family Membership Meetings may be called by the Lead Pastor when such action is necessary.

### **Notice:**

Any Family Membership Meetings must be duly called and notice mailed or emailed to the Active Members no less than 10 days prior to the proposed Meeting.

### **Quorum:**

A quorum exists when the active family membership is present at any duly called Family Membership Meeting.

## **Family Membership**

### **Qualifications:**

The Family Membership of The Power Place consists of those who have:

1. Professed faith in Jesus Christ and decided to become His disciple.
2. Signed the Family Membership Commitment as set forth herein.
3. Been baptized in water following their decision to follow Christ.
4. Demonstrated a willingness to be governed by the church & its leaders.

### **Rights & Responsibilities:**

Family Membership is a calling to function actively as a committed part of this local body, rather than simply joining a club or merely affiliating with an organization.

Those who are actively contributing as members also have the right and responsibility to:

1. Affirm prayerfully or provide caution regarding decisions presented to them.
2. Participate prayerfully in the decision-making process regarding the filling of the vacancy of the Lead Pastor, as well as any large fiscal decision presented by the Pastoral Leadership Team.
3. Continually protect the unity of the Spirit and maintain the bond of peace.
4. Serve in Leadership. Only Active Family Members are eligible to serve in leadership capacity at The Power Place.

### **Categories: Active & Inactive**

#### **Active Family Membership:**

Shall be open to anyone eighteen years or older who meets the qualifications for Family Membership as stated in these Bylaws. Active Family Members are those who have signed and are actively seeking to fulfill the actions stated in the Family Membership Commitment.

#### **Inactive Members:**

Shall consist of Family Members who have ceased to act in accordance with the Family Membership Commitment:

1. By being absent from church services for three consecutive months.
2. By ceasing to contribute regularly through tithes and offerings for a period of a year.
3. Or by currently being under discipline outlined in these Bylaws.

Inactive Members may still attend Family Membership Meetings but will have no voice in the meeting and no Family Member privileges until they are again placed on the Active Family Membership List by action of the Pastoral Leadership Team.

#### **Discipline:**

We believe that God has given the leadership of the church responsibility for the care and welfare both of the overall body and also for the individual soul. Our desire is to provide effective shepherd-like care for both, even in

moments of discipline. The purpose of discipline is to protect the church-at-large and to promote repentance in the person involved. Discipline is redemptive, corrective and protective in nature.

The Power Place family will follow the disciplinary procedure set forth in Matthew 18:15-20.

1. Private personal confrontation in an effort to resolve the matter privately.
2. Mediation involving one or two members of the Pastoral Leadership Team or Ministry Team Leader in an effort to resolve the matter.
3. If not resolved then immediate removal from Active Family Membership by action of the Pastoral Leadership Team.
4. Dismissed Family Members may be restored to Active Family Membership in the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8 and Galatians 6:1-2 when their attitude and lifestyle are judged to be again in accordance with the qualifications for Family Membership.

**Family Membership Commitment:**

The following represents the Family Membership Commitment and each new member shall sign and date their commitment by signing the **Family Membership Commitment Form**. (See Exhibit 1)

# Exhibit 1

## Family Membership Commitment Form

Having received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized in water, and being in agreement with The Power Place's vision, values, beliefs and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to join The Power Place Family as a family team member. In so doing, I commit myself to God and to the other family members to do the following...

**1. I will commit myself to the health of my life and of my church family.**

...by my faithfulness to TPP and its vision (Hebrews 10:25)

...by resolving conflict through the process of Matthew 18 (Matt. 18:15-20)

...by living in sexual purity and in personal integrity (Ephesians 4-5)

**2. I will seek to grow spiritually and relationally.**

...by investing in a daily time with God (Ephesians 5:15-20)

...by connecting into a small group and/or ministry (Acts 2:42-47)

...by developing a servant's heart (Philippians 2:3-8)

**3. I will focus with my church on the mission consistently.**

...by working to actively love people (1 Peter 1:22)

...by participating with efforts to serve, reach out, give and pray (Matthew 28:18-20)

...by working in unity toward the focus of the entire body (Psalm 133)

**4. I will support the ministry of The Power Place prayerfully and financially.**

...by praying for its leadership and direction (1 Timothy 2:1-5)

...by bringing tithes and offerings regularly (Malachi 3:6-10)

...by striving to live with a Kingdom-first mentality (Matthew 6:33)

Now, having read the Bylaws of The Power Place, including those dealing with church discipline, conflict resolution and leaders' rights and responsibilities, I wholly agree to be bound by the Bylaws. I commit to submit to the teaching and leadership of the Church, to the governing of the church according to its Bylaws, to the settlement of disputes by and/or among the members of the church without appeal to any outside civil court, according to Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 and to follow

**A Commitment to Biblical Conflict Resolution** (outlined below), to the

Word of God as our final authority, to the church's discipline upon ourselves, and I lovingly assume my responsibility to participate in the discipline of other members, as taught in Scripture.

## **A Commitment to Biblical Conflict Resolution**

As people reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that we are called to respond to conflict in a way that is remarkably different from the way the world deals with conflict.<sup>1</sup> We also believe that conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and grow to be like Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, in response to God's love and in reliance on his grace, we commit ourselves to respond to conflict according to the following principles:

**Glorify God** — Instead of focusing on our own desires or dwelling on what others may do, we will rejoice in the Lord and bring him praise by depending on his forgiveness, wisdom, power, and love, as we seek to faithfully obey his commands and maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude.<sup>3</sup>

**Get the Log out of Your Eye** — Instead of blaming others for a conflict or resisting correction, we will trust in God's mercy and take responsibility for our own contribution to conflicts—confessing our sins to those we have wronged, asking God to help us change any attitudes and habits that lead to conflict, and seeking to repair any harm we have caused.<sup>4</sup>

**Gently Restore** — Instead of pretending that conflict doesn't exist or talking about others behind their backs, we will overlook minor offenses or we will talk personally and graciously with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook, seeking to restore them rather than condemn them. When a conflict with a Christian brother or sister cannot be resolved in private, we will ask others in the body of Christ to help us settle the matter in a biblical manner.<sup>5</sup>

**Go and be reconciled** — Instead of accepting premature compromise or allowing relationships to wither, we will actively pursue genuine peace and reconciliation—forgiving others as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us, and seeking just and mutually beneficial solutions to our differences.<sup>6</sup>

By God's grace, we will apply these principles as a matter of stewardship and we will pray that our service as peacemakers will bring praise to our Lord and lead others to know His infinite love.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5:9; Luke 6:27-36; Gal. 5:19-26.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 8:28-29; 1 Cor. 10:31-11:1; James 1:2-4.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 37:1-6; Mark 11:25; John 14:15; Rom. 12:17-21; 1 Cor. 10:31; Phil. 4:2-9; Col. 3:1-4; James 3:17-18; 4:1-3; 1 Peter 2:12.

<sup>4</sup> Prov. 28:13; Matt. 7:3-5; Luke 19:8; Col. 3:5-14; 1 John 1:8-9.

<sup>5</sup> Prov. 19:11; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:29; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; James 5:9.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 5:23-24; 6:12; 7:12; Eph. 4:1-3, 32; Phil. 2:3-4.

<sup>7</sup> Matt. 25:14-21; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:18; 1 Peter 2:19; 4:19.

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**(Signature)**

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**(Print Name)**

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**(Date)**

**Procedure:**

Individuals interested in becoming Family Members must:

1. Attend the Family Membership class
2. Complete a Family Membership Interview with designated leaders/and or staff
3. Sign the Family Membership Commitment

Once these steps have been completed you will be received into The Power Place Family Membership.

## Exhibit 2

### **“The Power Place...A Family Church” Structure – Governance**

Realizing that we have been called by God to establish a ‘place’ where His presence and power can be felt and encountered in a fully functioning, healthy family setting, we hereby set forth the Structure & Governance of “The Power Place...A Family Church”.

#### **THE POWER PLACE STRUCTURE**

**Pastor-led:** The Power Place is a pastor-led church after the model that most closely represents the New Testament form of church governance.

Thus, the pastoral staff/leadership team has been Biblically charged with the role of leading the church – a competent team comprised of full-time, vocational pastors and directors who have been called by God for such a specific ministry. We know that board-led churches have gained popularity in America as of recent, but there is no Scriptural basis for this “Americanized” form of modern church government. The Power Place is not a political entity that is governed by representative elected officials but is a spiritual family led by God ordained leadership. We understand from scripture that leadership is a spiritual gift to be recognized, not voted upon (Rom. 12:8).

**Role of a Pastor:** While the word “pastor” is only mentioned once in the entire New Testament (Ephesians 4:11-12), the word “elder” is mentioned many times – each time specifically describing the role of what we know today as a full-time, vocational pastor. Thus, it is commonly held by biblical scholars that the words “elder” and “pastor” are used interchangeably in the New Testament to mean the same function and office. Whereas, “elder” was used predominantly in the early church to describe those who shepherd the church, and “pastor” was not, today the custom is reversed; “pastor” is used predominantly in today’s church to describe those who shepherd the church, and “elder” is not used as often. So the ministry description of today’s pastor can be best understood by studying and applying the ministry description of an elder. Both Paul and Peter were consistent with the same use of terminology and the respective role.

Paul’s address to the Elders (presbuteros) from Ephesus: “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you

overseers, to shepherd (poimaino [pastor]) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” Acts 20:(17)28

Peter’s address to the Elders (presbuteros) scattered throughout the world: “Shepherd (poimaino [pastor]) the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly.” 1 Peter 5:1-2

Functions of a New Testament Pastor (Elder):

1. Feed & Equip the Flock (Eph. 4:11-12, Mt. 28:20; Jn. 21:17; Acts 2:42; 11:25-26; 1 Tim. 3:2; 4:13; 5:17-18; Titus 1:9)
2. Protect the Flock (Acts 15:6: 20:17, 28-31a; Titus 1:5, 6, 9; 1 Thess. 5:12)
3. Govern the Flock (2 Sam. 5:2; Ps. 78:71-72; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2; 1 Tim. 5:17a; Titus 1:7)
4. Care for the Flock (James 5:14; Acts 20:35; 2 Sam. 12:3; Ps. 23; 2 Cor. 2:4)

At The Power Place, the church family and friends can expect that our pastors function according to the New Testament model described above.

**Accountability:** Without a board, then, who keeps the pastors accountable? Again, the model in The New Testament provides us our guiding principles. The plurality of pastors in the local New Testament church was always under the oversight of a plurality of apostles who governed all the local church leaders under their jurisdiction. Apostles in the New Testament were pastors’ pastors who exercised protective authority, offered accountability, assisted in decision-making, settled disputes, enforced sound doctrine, exercised discipline, and ensured proper business practices. Since Scripture does not say that that office ever ceased after the original apostles passed away, then that office still exists today and functions in those same capacities.

Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders (about the circumcision of Gentiles)... The apostles and elders met to consider this question... As they (Paul and his companions) traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. Acts 15:2b, 6; 16:4

For this reason, I left you in Crete (Paul to Titus, both acting with apostolic authority), that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and

appoint elders (presbuteros – local pastoral authority) in every city as I commanded you. Titus 1:5 & Acts 14:23

The Power Place is an autonomous, self-governing church. However, our pastor is held locally accountable by a world-wide, reputable network of churches called the Assemblies of God. By issuing the credentials for our pastor, the moral, ethical, and theological standards of the pastor and staff are ensured for the church family and friends of The Power Place. The Assemblies of God network is a cooperative fellowship which allows churches and ministers to pursue their individual expressions and purposes.

The pastor of The Power Place is willingly submitted to the Assemblies of God and to the Pennsylvania-Delaware Ministries Network of the Assemblies of God and its Leadership as well as to the Greater Philadelphia Area Sectional Presbyter for accountability purposes. (See Exhibit 3)

The Power Place functions as a family...thus the name...

**"The Power Place...A Family Church"** and is governed in a Biblical Family way outlined here in the *"Seven Values of Church Family Governance"*.

## Seven Values of Church Family Governance

Adapted for The Power Place from a Position Paper by Jeffrey S. Leake

### INTRODUCTION:

All churches function by some type of legal structure. Every church has a Constitution and By-Laws which define who leads, how decisions are made, what the standards are for membership and leadership. But since the New Testament does not include a document with 'inspired' Constitutional specifics, the best that we can do is discern certain values and principles of function based on the book of Acts and the Epistles. Most historic church governance structures fall into two categories:

1. Episcopal – This is a top-down form of governance. The most famous Denomination that uses this model is the Catholic Church. Authority flows from the Pope down to Cardinals, to Bishops, to Priests, to People.

2. Congregational – This is a bottom-up form of governance. Historically the Assemblies of God have used this form of structure. Authority flows up from the People to the Board to the Pastor. Another way of describing these two forms of governance is through more familiar terms:

- Dictatorship – The leader decides.
- Democracy – The majority decides.

This is a fairly simplified definition of things, but these polar opposite concepts create for us the tension involved in any group of people that are trying to function. An additional challenge is the fact that neither of these above models completely represents the kind of attitudes and values visible in the Bible when it comes to a local church.

So I am attempting to outline a new paradigm for church governance. I know that is a fairly large task. The two words that most aptly define this new paradigm are the words THEOCRACY and FAMILY. A Theocracy is what the nation of Israel was originally designed to be. Theocracy means – God rules, God decides.

The local church is a theocracy in that Jesus is the Head of His body which is the church. So any effective church will seek and obey His leadership in what they do.

But theocracy alone is very hard to understand and apply. How do we know we have heard from God? Who interprets what Jesus is saying to His church? How do we carry out His will in unity?

This is where the second word comes in: FAMILY. My theory is the local church should function much like a family. The principles involved in healthy family governance should be applied to the way a local church family does its work.

So let's journey through these FAMILY VALUES together.

## Value #1: Family vs. Institution

The foundational value for how the church should function is based on the core nature of the church. The nature of the church should determine its function. We should not pattern the church after governments, business concepts, or community organizations. The Bible uses several metaphors to describe its nature...Body, Flock, Army, Fellowship, Bride, but probably the most impacting metaphor that the Bible uses is the idea that the church is a FAMILY. When we look at decision making, or discipline, or we define structure we should keep the family concept as our guiding principle. Consider the way Paul implores Timothy (who was leading the church at Ephesus) to teach people to relate to one another. 1 Timothy chapter five opens up with these words:

*Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.*

Consider the TONE of how our relationships should be. This is not the tone of an institution. This is not the tone we find in politics, or business, or government.

- We appeal to a Father and respect his role and position.
- We treat younger men as brothers. We challenge, but in love and with faith.
- We are tender and respectful toward spiritual moms.
- We protect and cherish our sisters.

Now dysfunctional family is not a good model either. But healthy family is what we are shooting for. There is no harshness, suspicion, posturing, political maneuvering, manipulation or control. Instead there is trust, respect, forgiveness, positive negotiating, coaching, and loving correction. So we need to begin here. How does a healthy family function? How does a church work like a family? What about in decision making? What about in accountability? How do we make this concept practical? How can we think less like an institution and more like a happy healthy family?

## Value #2: Agreement vs. Voting

If we use the 'FAMILY' metaphor as the grid through which we look at church governance, we have to ask, 'How does a family govern itself? How do family decisions get made?'

In my family, with five kids, I understand the breakdown that occurs when we decide to have every family member involved in a vote. Instantly, the dynamic of our family breaks down and we have family members opposing one another to get their way. As a father, part of my job is to teach my family the principles of agreement. They need to learn how to honor one another, how to defer to one another. They need to be taught to be considerate and giving. The over-riding principle of family decision making is this: IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER WHAT WE DECIDE TO DO AS LONG AS WE DECIDE TO DO IT TOGETHER. Voting is a political process. It brings with it a political atmosphere. It leads people to ask one central question: WHAT DO I WANT? or WHAT DO I THINK IS BEST? It requires people to agree with your opinion to get your way. Therefore, voting not only reinforces a self-centered thought process, it encourages you to mobilize your influence to get what you want. This might work well in our national government--but it is truly

poisonous to a family environment. So what's the alternative in a church family?

Lead people to a place of common agreement, not by enforcing a dictatorship, and not by operating through democracy.

1. Vision - this should begin with the Pastor. The Biblical pattern is for God to choose a person to lead the way. He never chooses to give His vision first to a committee, but always to a called individual.
2. Wisdom - Proverbs talks about how an abundance of counselors will make a strategy sound and effective. So the Leadership Teams of the church should be involved in adding wisdom to the vision.
3. Information - the overall church family should be given advanced and reasoned information before any big decision.
4. Input - one great benefit of 'voting' is that everyone has a say. But voting provides a limited voice to the family. It typically requires 'yes' or 'no' answers.  
Family members should have the opportunity to make things better. How? Instead of taking a vote we should strategically use SURVEYS. This will give potentially solid data to the Leaders as to how to proceed and what level of agreement there is in the family.
5. Prayer - a major key in the process is gaining direction from Heaven. So as the entire church family becomes aware of the situation at hand, they can be involved in the process of intercession. It is here that further input can happen as gifts of the Spirit are in operation through members of the family.
6. Discussion - the survey information, the direction from the Spirit, the data involved should then be brought to discussion on levels of leadership throughout the church family. They should then make a recommendation to the church family.
7. Affirmation - this is the opportunity for the church family to add their agreement or offer their caution about the decision.

## Value #3: Appointment vs. Election

What about leadership selection? How does a family select its leadership? In a natural family the selection process is fairly obvious. Those who have reproduced (the parents) and birthed the family are those who are given the charge of leadership.

What about in a spiritual family? The principle can apply here as well, but of course not in the physical sense. But leadership in the church is given not only to those who are more mature, older, or wiser--it is given to those who will help reproduce character and ministry in others.

Ephesians 4:11-16 states why God gave 'leadership gifts' to the church...to equip God's people for works of service that the body of Christ might be built up and reach the measure of the fullness of Christ.

So spiritual leadership for the church is always put in the hands of its equipping gifts – the EQUIPPERS. We establish their role by recognizing the gift that is on their life and affirming their leadership. Now, an equipping gift may or may not be used by a 'full-time' pastor. Most often it is wise to release an equipper to do that job full-time. But the gift is the gift. It doesn't require a career for it to operate.

So we must ask who are the primary equippers of this church? These equippers should form and function much like the governing elders did in Ephesus (according to 1 Timothy) or the church counsel in Jerusalem (Acts 15).

Alongside of the EQUIPPERS should be the EXPERTS. Who are they? In Acts 6 the equipper elders appointed seven experts for meeting the practical needs of the people of the Jerusalem church. It just makes sense to solicit and release the good counsel and practical skills of the members of the church family.

How do we identify the equippers?

- Obvious gift and function as an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor-teacher.
- A following of people who are being equipped and mobilized in ministry.
- A demonstration of personal responsibility for groups of people who are in the church or need to be reached. Not positional but rather result-oriented.
- Fruitful lifestyle and ministry.
- Of course along with that there must be the Biblical qualifications of eldership mentioned in 1 Timothy, Acts 6, and Titus. In a larger congregation, the governing and equipping elders should be the leaders of the leaders or the equippers of the equippers.

The second type of governing leaders is the EXPERTS, those with needed wisdom, experience, or skill necessary for effective function. In Acts 6, they selected Experts to help the apostles to care for the needy members of the congregation. This was the pressing issue of the time, so they selected men who would be able to deal with this issue with excellence.

The apostles (EQUIPPERS) were to remain focused on spiritual leadership/governance and devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The

appointed EXPERTS were to use their wisdom skills, organization, and business expertise to make sure that the practical needs of the church family were being met. It is interesting to note that some of the Experts (Philip and Stephen) actually grew in their role and became EQUIPPERS also. Both became effective preachers in their own right.

It makes sense to me in the appointment of EXPERTS that we select based on what is needed in the body at the moment including the skill sets or wisdom gifts needed for the season the church is currently experiencing. These leaders must also meet the character/spiritual qualifications of Acts 6...full of wisdom, the spirit, and faith.

So what kind of expertise is needed? In general, men of prayer who are people who lead their own families well and understand what is needed in healthy family function. More specifically, there may be needs for strategic planning, personnel management, construction, design, insurance, security, business development, accounting, or a host of other skills and experience. It would be most beneficial to any family to have the appropriate expertise available at its time of need. This is also true of a church family.

## Value #4: Fathering vs. Impeachment

Without a doubt, the most important issue in governance comes in the area of correction and conflict. How do we handle it when family members don't get along? What about if the pastor goes off? To prevent abuse of power and protect our interest, often we revert to very unbiblical and truly unhealthy methods of dealing with conflict and disagreement.

When we resort to political solutions to solve family problems we develop a culture of suspicion, division, gossip, and gridlock. Many church families never recover from mishandling a moment of conflict. So how do families properly handle conflict?

The Bible gives an explicit process for it. It is found in Matthew 18:15-17 and it gives very direct steps to take to practice healthy church family conflict resolution skills.

Here's the process:

1. Personal Private Confrontation - when a brother/sister offends you (or you are concerned for their direction), go to them and talk to them about it. Don't talk to anyone else about it. Don't call the prayer chain about it. Talk to them in love.

2. Mediation - if that does not work, then bring along one or two mature objective leaders to help resolve the problem. Through a mediator an agreement can be negotiated and terms executed so that offenses can be resolved and unity regained.

3. Church Leadership Action - If it turns out that a person refuses to stop their destructive behavior, it may be necessary for the Leaders of a church family to take the step of loving, redemptive dis-fellowship.

Let's apply this process in its most basic everyday function.

- If a member has a problem with the pastor, that member should talk to the pastor first...not to anyone else. Most situations resolve without any other steps. If the problem is resolved, no further action is needed and unity has prevailed in the family. If, however the issue is not resolved, the pastor or member has the obligation to bring a mediator to help resolve whatever the challenge is.
- If a pastor has a problem with a member, or another pastor--they should talk to the person privately first. When conflicts between brothers or differences of opinions are brought into a meeting, and votes are taken to resolve the issue, the decisions made create permanent fault lines in relationships. Many times people are cowardly in their dealing with problems. They want to spring an issue in a meeting because they feel like there will be more support for 'their side' in a group setting.

It's the same reason why an offended person says, "I am not the only one who feels this way!", when they bring the issue up. What that actually reveals is that the Matthew 18 process has already been violated by talking it around (gossip) prior to the personal meeting.

One of the primary jobs of a Lead Pastor is the teaching of Matthew 18 and the guarding of family harmony by insisting on its practice.

What if the PASTOR is the PROBLEM?

What do we do when family members and the pastor have a disagreement?

What if the pastor goes off?

These are the BIG questions and very valid concerns we have in any discussion of church governance. So let me state it very clearly, THERE MUST BE ACCOUNTABILITY!

It is irresponsible to think that anyone is above needing confrontation or correction. There are thousands of stories that could be shared about abuse of power, descent into self-destruction, embezzlement, and other forms of poor or harmful leadership.

So if the pastor is like the 'father' in a family (remember we are using the 'Family Governance' model), then how does Dad receive correction when he becomes offensive?

Before I answer that, let me just make the simple observation that people in authority have the potential to do the most harm. Power wielded for self-interest leaves a wake of wounded followers. No one else can impact the organization as negatively or as positively than the person charged with leadership. That's why it is so essential that a leader maintains an attitude of HUMILITY and that an organization (church family) maintains good processes of ACCOUNTABILITY.

So how is the 'father' (leader/pastor) corrected and confronted?

1. THE FOUNDATION - follow the same pattern of Matthew 18 as is used for everyone else. The first two steps of the process do not take into consideration a person's position. They are to be applied to everyone regardless of their level of leadership. So if the pastor needs confronted, you do what the Bible says: a) talk to him personally and privately; b) if that doesn't resolve the issue, then bring along a mediator.
2. THE DISCIPLINE PROCESS - But what about step #3? What happens if a mediator cannot resolve the issue? Who has authority over the pastor? The people? How can this issue be handled well?

The answer to this lies again in the FAMILY metaphor. In a government when a president has become unworthy of office, we IMPEACH them. They are voted out. In a business, when a CEO is not being effective, we IMPEACH (or fire) them. They are voted out by a Board of Directors. But what about in a family?

In a healthy multi-generational family, correction could come to a father by his own father. When dad has gone wrong, granddad is needed. Then correction can come to a leader in a loving, face to face, redemptive relationship rather than through an ugly, political, committee-based voting process.

Think of the metaphor of FAMILY. God never intended for wives to discipline their husbands. Yes, an open husband should always be humble enough to listen to his wife. If he doesn't, he is a FOOL. But this is precisely what we are talking about here. What happens when the man is a fool? Wives trying to correct their foolish husbands come across as nagging and disrespectful. Kids trying to correct their dad's foolishness is both impractical and ineffective. It also puts an unnatural strain on the maturity of the kids involved.

They were not built to handle the strain of a foolish father. In the same way, church members were never designed, according to the Bible, to lead and correct a foolish pastor. So who assumes that role? Who is your pastor's pastor? To whom is your pastor submitted? Every pastor/leader should have at least one (preferably several) spiritual fathers in their life to whom they are committed and submitted. And when a pastor refuses the normal process of Matthew 18; when they cease to listen to advice; when they are not humble enough to receive relational suggestions and correction; and when a greater authority is needed--it is then that we look to this pastor's pastor.

## Value #5: Leadership vs. Representation

The foundation of any discussion on governance has to do with authority. Who has ultimate authority? Where do we look for direction? Whose will rules?

Let's consider the options:

- Democracy - Majority Rules.
- Republic - the Law rules.
- Business - the Board of Directors (who represent the stockholders) rules.
- Dictatorship - the Leader rules.
- Theocracy - God rules.
- Family - Unity rules. (As led and taught by Dad and Mom).

Church governance, as best as I can Biblically discern, is to be a combination of the last two authority structures. Ultimately, the church is to be a Theocracy. Jesus is declared the HEAD of the church. That puts Him in charge.

The central question of any decision making has to be, WHAT IS THE WILL OF JESUS?

Anything less than that will find a church family fighting against the Will of Jesus and pursuing their own agenda. This should be the central question of every natural family as well. What does Jesus want in my home? Authority rests in the hands of Jesus. Discernment and the ability to decide to properly follow Christ rests in the hands of the leaders in a church family.

Effective church leaders should try to balance two issues:

1. What does Jesus want?
2. How can we follow His will in a way that involves the whole family and keeps us together in healthy relationships and in as much agreement as is possible?

Since that is the case, church leaders should function less as representatives of the people (democracy) and more as representatives of Christ (theocracy). The goal is not to execute the will of the people or the decisions of the majority, but rather to mobilize the church family to adopt and execute the Will of God.

Probably the best Biblical example contrasting 'representation' and 'leadership' is the Numbers 13-14 narrative.

1. God was speaking to Moses that it was time to enter the Promised Land. Since Israel was primarily a 'theocracy' (God rules), there was really no alternative. Where God is concerned, it is either obedience or disobedience.
2. Moses decides to collect data and build wisdom in preparing to enter. So he selected 12 Representatives, one from each tribe. Their assignment was to decide whether or not to obey God's purpose. Their assignment was to investigate what it would take to enter the land effectively.
3. Ten of the 12 Representatives listened to the grumbling of the people and VOTED to go back to Egypt. They voted to disobey the Will of God. It is interesting to note here that often the majority can fail to be accurate in discerning the will of God.
4. This is where leadership is needed. We see three leaders in this story. Moses, Caleb, and Joshua all were more concerned with representing God's Will to the people.
5. The result of the Ten Representatives' decision to follow the will of the people was 38 additional years of wandering in the wilderness. In a Democracy or Union, those elected are to represent the will of the people. In a Theocracy, those who are selected to lead should represent the Will of God to the people. They are chosen because they can lead their church family to follow God's Will with sensitivity and wisdom. In a family, the parents are also to help their children to follow God's Will. The process involves more than just decrees and discipline. The process involves loving, tender instruction. It involves shepherding and guidance out of a caring relationship. An effective parent is not so much concerned with getting their own way. They are concerned with the wellbeing of the family and the growth and maturity of their children. Decisions are made with those two ideals in mind. When you consider the role of Moses as the leader of Israel, you can see that he led out of personal sacrifice. He paid a higher price for leading God's people than anyone within that community. The people

accused Moses of being a self-serving dictator, but God continually affirmed him as the point person for leadership.

Now a common objection is that this theocratic/family governance approach puts a tremendous amount of responsibility on the point person. They have the potential to make or break the entire process!!!

This is true! And it is for that very reason that the most important qualification for leadership on any level is the quality of HUMILITY. In fact, I will go so far as to say that in any of the governance structures (democracy, republic, business models)—if you don't have HUMBLE leaders, the entire system breaks down.

In the book, *Good To Great*, this type of leader is described. Collins calls them LEVEL 5 Leaders. They have a combination of HUMILITY and DRIVE. Any organization that has a leader that does not have Humility and Drive will be an organization in some level of crisis.

## Value #6: Teamwork vs. Membership

What is the difference between the two? Team Member vs. Club Member?

- Team members should have a greater commitment to the interests of the whole. Club members have a commitment to their own personal interest and seek to protect those interests appropriately.
- Team members give 100% effort so that team goals can be accomplished. Club members expect that the club give 100% so that their desires can be satisfied.
- Team members are expected to fulfill their assigned role and carry out their specific responsibilities. Club members can do what they want as long as they stay within the basic rules of participation and consistently pay their dues.
- Team members are accountable for the success or failure of their team. They own the challenges and celebrate the victories. They are also accountable to one another. If a team member ceases to perform, the other members should rightly challenge them. Club members are accountable to not violate rules and policies. Their job is to enjoy the club. They are kept accountable to pay their dues. But they do not own the success or failure of the club. They expect management to tackle the problems and produce a quality situation for them.
- Team members stick together even when they are losing games (at least good team members do). Club members feel the right to abandon a poor performing club to join another that can meet their needs better.

A Church Family is NOT a Club. It is a TEAM. Therefore, Membership has less to do with rights and more to do with responsibilities. A better word than Membership might be Partnership or Team Player.

In a natural family, children will not mature if they take a 'club member' mentality.

Many kids do, unfortunately, take this posture. Maturing children will begin to own their family, participate in family challenges, contribute to the function of the home, and stick with their family even during difficult moments.

Church families will not build mature people if they take a 'club member' mentality. Many church members do, unfortunately. But maturing church people will own their church and its vision, participate in church family challenges, contribute to the ministry efforts of a church, and will stick with their family even during difficult moments.

In actuality, this may be the most important value adjustment. If a church family thinks and acts like a winning team, then many challenges will be automatically overcome.

## Value #7: Purpose vs. Tradition

One of the amazing qualities of God is His creativity. He is always doing a NEW thing. Jesus modeled this throughout His ministry. Sometimes He would speak the Word and healing would flow. Then at other times, he would spit on the dirt and apply mud to a man's eyes and healing would happen. Following Jesus is an adventure. It is never dull. It is rarely static. It is typically not safe, requires risk, and does not feel comfortable. But obedience to His leading always leads to incredible miracles and breakthroughs.

Now the tendency in any long-term community or organization is to move toward things that are safe, same, and secure. Religious organizations are famous for codifying rules, and locking in restrictions. In order for an organization to be stable, policies multiply and structures become more rigid. Controls are put in place and committees discuss and attempt to manage and/or limit change.

While most rules and restrictions are birthed out of good motives (to protect and preserve), the unintended result can be resistance to what God is doing in the NOW.

Therefore, it is critical for church families to stay attached to the future and not to the past. It is imperative for any church body that claims to follow the HEAD (Jesus Christ) to remain humble and ready to hear His current directives. It is essential that we not make a 'god' out of the traditions that make us comfortable but not necessarily obedient.

If a local church family is to stay fluid and flexible enough to follow a NOW word from God, there are several things that are most helpful:

- When it comes to constitutions, by-laws, policies, and restrictions - LESS IS MORE. Families don't operate well by written laws anyway. Relationships guide a family. Now obviously some by-laws and policies are necessary to function legally. But to remain ready for what is next and prepared as a church for the future, the guiding principle is LESS IS MORE.
- When it comes to decision-making the biggest question is not, 'What Have We Done?'...it is rather 'What Is God Doing?' Churches that value their heritage more than their future are destined to diminish. When we are tied to purpose more than tradition, we free the next generation to pursue God's fresh work.
- When it comes to executing the Will of God and the direction of ministry, we choose SMALL GROUPS over committees. We choose to empower the people who have the responsibility to do the ministry with the authority necessary to function. Rather than talk about it (as committees often do), we want to just do it (through the wisdom of relationships in a task force or small group).

We need to intentionally tie ourselves to God's PURPOSE. Whatever stands in the way of God's purpose being fulfilled must be removed or altered so that progress is not hindered. Even traditions must bow to purpose. Now, let me qualify. Traditions in themselves are not bad. In fact, healthy families typically have specific traditions that become a sort of glue for healthy family function. They help us stick together. They remind us of our wonderful heritage. They bring back a sense of gratitude for the privilege of the family we belong to. Traditions SHOULD BE MAINTAINED when they contribute to family health and purpose. But no tradition in and of itself is sacred. It was tradition to not heal on the Sabbath in Jesus day. But that did not stop Jesus from helping someone in need. Traditions should never impede purpose. Healthy church families that remain effective over several generations intentionally tie themselves to God's purpose.

# Family Governance Objections

There are a few more Values to cover in this Family Governance Model, but I thought I would pause to address some significant objections/questions:

Q. What would keep the pastor from surrounding himself with 'yes-men' who were blindly following the lead of the pastor?

To answer this question, we need to consider what our options are and which are the best. What if the pastor is simply wanting to push his own agenda and not God's? What if the pastor is selecting 'yes' people who are corruptly administering finances or programming?

- We can VOTE out the pastor and seek a political solution. This method will create a political environment and result in lasting division of some type.
- We can apply PETITION-like pressure and protest the leadership's decision. Again, this will not have an end result of health.
- We can use the Matthew 18 process and confront through the 3-steps. During step three we can appeal to the pastor's pastor. Not only is this the Biblical prescription it is the healthiest long-term approach.

The real problem is not the leaders selected, it is the unwillingness to listen to advice or to function according to ethical standards. If a pastor is this stubborn, it will require significant correction from the person to whom he is submitted.

It is very possible that a stubborn pastor won't submit. At that point, it might be necessary to 1) transition to another church; or 2) take measures to get a new pastor.

Q. What about that? How would a church remove a stubborn or failed Senior Pastor?

I guess this entire 'family governance' system could be described by the following phrase: We always seek relational solutions to problems and not political ones.

So what is the relational process of removing a Senior Pastor? The political process is fairly clear. It is the process of IMPEACHMENT. People vote to remove a leader and appoint a new one.

What is the relational solution to the removal of a Senior Pastor?

- The Bible says that we should not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or more witnesses. So this process of 'discipline' for a leader must be limited to very serious issues.
- When there is a problem, it should be handled through the Matthew 18 process (outlined earlier in this document).

What about when we hit phase three of the Matthew 18 process? A Senior Pastor is not listening to correction from his 'spiritual fathers', and not the advice of his leadership team or from concerned members? What then?

- When the church feels that they have reached an impasse with their Senior Pastor, or when they feel the pastor is acting immorally or unethically, they should bring their concerns to the Accountability Group (spiritual fathers) that the Senior Pastor is personally accountable to.
- The Senior Pastor's Accountability (Fathers) Group and the local Leadership Team should decide together what action steps to take to deal with the issue. Then they should seek to enforce that decision together for the benefit of the Senior Pastor and the church. In this approach there are several options available that are not present in the "Impeachment" approach that is typical in a democratic system.
  1. They can offer the pastor a temporary redemptive sabbatical to deal with some issues in counseling so that the potential is there for him to be restored to leadership.
  2. They can deal with some less serious (skill based or leadership) issues privately, and without involving the entire church in a debate or controversy.
  3. Or if necessary, they may need to ask the Senior Pastor to step out of leadership. The Accountability Group can then seek to provide some redemptive solutions and processes for the Pastor even after he has resigned from that local church. Impeachment only allows for removal. It does not deal redemptively with a fallen or failed leader.

Another advantage of the Accountability Group's guidance and partnership with a local church and its leadership team is the transition and search process for new leadership. This mature group of leaders can help step in and provide wisdom and spiritual leadership in determining how to strengthen the church during a difficult season. A

great example of this was New Life Church in Colorado. The church was 14,000 in number. Their pastor fell into sin and dishonesty. When this was uncovered, the church board and Pastor's Accountability Group dealt with the crisis together.

- They removed him from leadership.
- They recommended a redemptive process for him.
- The Accountability Group all stood on the platform during this day of announcement. One of them addressed the church and took the questions from the media. They provided great leadership and backing to the local church during the storm.
- They helped to appoint a Temporary Pastor.
- They guided the church to a number of qualified candidates for the future Senior Pastor.
- The church then decided on a new Senior Pastor. When he was installed, the Accountability Group joined with the Leadership Team in blessing and backing his ministry.

The New Life Church has not only survived this horrible crisis, they have remained strong and have a new and capable Senior Pastor leading them today. My opinion is that without the Accountability Group in place, this church would have had a very difficult time navigating through the maze and mess of their Senior Pastor's fall.

Q. What if the pastor is insecure and intimidated by people of excellence—and that leads him to surround himself with unwise or mediocre men? Or what if he picks a leadership team who simply align with his selfish agenda? In this instance, the problem is not so much with the governance system as it is the pastor. There is no governance plan that will overcome an insecure, selfish, or incompetent leader.

The only hope for that pastor/leader is to have a mentor or father in his life to coach him through this character struggle. Committees and leadership teams were designed to support a leader not to lead a leader. Anytime a leader is failing to lead, leadership teams can identify it, and they can recommend change. But it is up to the leader to lead.

In my opinion, the pastor's pastor (or group of fathers) is an even more critical group than is the church leadership team when it comes to the pastor's character and leadership advancement.

## CONCLUSION:

Before attempting to form long-term strategies for a church Constitution and By-Laws, I thought it best to establish and agree upon the VALUES that guide those decisions. In my experience, once the VALUES are agreed upon, the specifics seem to work themselves out.

I also think that the VALUES are even more important than the By-Laws. Very few pastors, Board members, or Church members ever read or refer to the Church's guiding document. But the VALUES become the grid through which we view the world.

We should refer to the VALUES often. In fact, these values should be taught as a basis not just for church function, but in many ways, for improved natural family function. Most of these values are good guidelines for all types of relationships.

Before a church writes or adjusts its specific Constitutional structure, it should agree upon its values. When the values are established, then the specifics of structure and function should simply express those values.

## **Exhibit 3**

### **Assemblies of God**

The Power Place has voluntarily affiliated with the Assemblies of God – a worldwide cooperative fellowship functioning as a network of ministries relating laterally and sharing common interests covenantally.

The official website for the Assemblies of God is *www.ag.org*, which contains ample information regarding its history, beliefs, vision, leadership, governing structure, statistics, affiliations, and other matters of interest.

Local churches in this network operate independently once they become affiliated with the General Council of the Assemblies of God. This necessarily means:

- every church may choose their own lead pastor
- every church owns its own assets
- every church determines its own programs and ministries

The Power Place is located within the PennDel Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God. The presbytery lending apostolic oversight for The Power Place are the officers of the PennDel Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God. The candidates for these offices are chosen from the membership of the Ministry Network – a body of credentialed ministers of which members of the Pastoral Leadership Team of The Power Place are a part.

If a family member of The Power Place ever suspects that our pastor has failed morally, ethically, or theologically, then he/she is obligated to confront the pastor first (Matthew 18:15), and if that does not work, then bring along one or two mature objective leaders to help resolve the issue. If it turns out that a person refuses to stop their destructive behavior, it may be necessary to then contact the following individuals so that a prompt and thorough investigation & resolution can occur.

### **Presbyter of the Greater Philadelphia Area Section**

Rev. Bob Novak  
181 Wilde Ave.  
Drexel Hill, PA 19026  
610-328-2843  
[pastorbob@lcfconnect.com](mailto:pastorbob@lcfconnect.com)

**Director of U.S. Missions & Church Development of the PennDel  
Ministry Network of the A/G**

Rev. Tom Rees  
4651 Westport Drive  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055  
717-580-8188  
[tom@penndel.org](mailto:tom@penndel.org)

**Superintendent of PennDel Ministry Network of the Assemblies of  
God**

Rev. Stephen Tourville  
4651 Westport Drive  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055  
717-795-5921  
[supt@penndel.org](mailto:supt@penndel.org)

**History:** The Assemblies of God has its roots in a religious revival that began in the late 1800s. In 1914, both clergymen and laymen gathered from 20 states and several foreign countries for a "General Council" in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

From that meager beginning, the Assemblies of God affiliated network of ministries was born and now numbers over 66 million adherents worldwide (2012 statistics).